

Senator Barbara Boxer – Statement for the Record
Statement on the 98th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide
April 24, 2013

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 98th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

In 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide based in part on the horrific crimes perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenian people in the early 20th Century.

Between 1915 and 1923, more than 1.5 million Armenians were marched to their deaths in the deserts of the Middle East, murdered in concentration camps, drowned at sea, and forced to endure horrific acts of brutality at the hands of the Ottoman Empire.

Yet, in the 65 years that have passed since the Convention was adopted, successive U.S. Administrations have refused to call the deliberate massacre of the Armenians by its rightful name—genocide.

For many years, I have urged both Democratic and Republican Administrations to finally acknowledge the truth. I do so again today. It is long past time for our government to acknowledge, once and for all, that the Armenian Genocide is a widely documented fact supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence.

In fact, the Armenian Genocide—along with the Holocaust—is one the most studied cases of genocide in history. Tragically, Adolf Hilter even used the Ottoman Empire's action against the Armenians to justify the extermination of the Jews in the Holocaust, saying in 1939, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

A number of sovereign nations, ranging from Argentina to France, as well as 43 out of 50 U.S. States have recognized what happened as genocide. Yet, successive U.S. Administrations continue only to refer to the Armenian Genocide as an annihilation, massacre or murder.

The entire Armenian community and the descendants of the victims of the Armenian Genocide continue to suffer prolonged pain each and every day that goes by without full acknowledgement by the United States.

I hope that this is the year that we finally right this terrible wrong. Because the United States cannot and does not turn a blind eye to atrocities around the globe. In fact, the United States is often the first to speak out in the face of violence and unspeakable suffering and to urge other countries to respond. But sadly, our nation is on the wrong side of history when it comes to the Armenian Genocide.

So this April 24, as we pause to remember the victims and to celebrate the many

contributions Armenian Americans have made to our great country, I hope that the U.S. will finally and firmly stand on the right side of history and officially condemn the crimes of 1915-1923 by their appropriate name.